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The European Union and Cyprus: The Power of Attraction as a Solution to the Cyprus Issue

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The European Union and Cyprus: The Power of Attraction as a Solution to the Cyprus Issue

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Since the application of the government of the Republic of Cyprus was accepted by the European Union (EU) and accession negotiations began in March 1998, controversy has surrounded the extent to which the accession process could help or hinder a solution to the longstanding division on the island. The main purpose of this paper is to explore the extent to which EU accession and the 'power of attraction' can act as a catalyst for a solution to the Cyprus issue. The main argument is that despite much negative comment surrounding the accession process, portraying it as 'a catalyst for catastrophe' rather than solution, there are many positives to Cyprus' accession which, in the long-term, will be beneficial to all parties involved in the 'Cypriot dispute' – the Greek-Cypriots, the Turkish-Cypriots and Turkey. Moreover, it is argued that the EU, in the form of enlargement and eventual membership for Cyprus and Turkey, can provide the necessary incentives and framework (economic, political, security) for a solution to the Cyprus issue.

I. Introduction

Christopher Hill has noted about the EU's capacity for conflict prevention that "a central challenge...will be to handle the grey area which exists between the 'hard' security guarantees of NATO [and], the 'soft' security assured by EU membership or its prospect" (Hill 2001: 322). It is the contention of this paper that Cyprus is one such 'grey area'. Moreover, whilst recognising that the EU is still in the process of gestation with regard to its 'hard' security capability, the main argument in this paper is that the process of accession leading to membership of the EU can be a positive instrument for resolving and preventing conflict within Europe; in particular when applied to the case of Cyprus and Turkey.

Such an argument has both an 'idealistic' and 'pragmatic' element (Cecchini, Jones and Lorentzen 2001: 155). Idealistic in the sense that enlargement encourages all states that share in the ideals and values embedded in the EU (as defined by the Copenhagen Criteria¹) to join. Pragmatic in that the EU provides a framework for encouraging compliance through a series of instruments and incentives for long-term peace and stability – before and after accession. As Michael Smith has noted "the EU has the economic capacity to reward and to punish; it has the

¹ The Copenhagen Criteria were articulated as follows: "Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for the protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union" (Bulletin of the European Communities, 26 (6) 1993: 13).

technical and administrative capacity to support and stabilise; and it has the capacity to negotiate in ways unknown to many of the other participants in the European order” (cited by Hill 2001: 329). Of course, it is acknowledged that for enlargement to be successful as a ‘soft’ security instrument, ‘perception’ is important: enlargement and integration (and the values embedded in the EU) must be seen by all parties involved as the most desirable (and legitimate) formula for creating prosperity and stability in Europe.

The focus of this paper is on what Gabriel Munuera has defined as the ‘power of attraction’ – whereby “the lure of membership can help to prevent conflicts outside the EU’s borders by suggesting the advantages of good behaviour to eager candidates and by giving the EU leverage where they do not take the hint” (cited by Hill 2001: 323). Given this focus the paper will test the extent to which enlargement and the ‘power of attraction’ can (or cannot) help to catalyse a solution to the Cyprus issue, and thus help prevent a potential conflict erupting in the southern Mediterranean region. Indeed it has been suggested that if a solution was found to the Cyprus issue prior to its accession, the EU could supply “structures, guarantees and incentives that could hold together a bi-communal Cyprus, where otherwise centrifugal forces would be more likely to prevail” (Emerson and Tocci 2002: 1).

In order to articulate the argument this paper will be broken down into three sections. The first section will briefly outline the philosophical underpinnings of the ‘enlargement as foreign policy approach’ and define and review the instruments available to the EU. The second section will examine the effect of the accession process (including the perceptions of the actors involved) and the various EU instruments deployed in the case of Cyprus and Turkey.² The third and final section will then evaluate the utility of the ‘power of attraction approach’ in the case of Cyprus and Turkey, *vis-à-vis* the effect that such an approach has had as a catalyst for the resolution of the ‘Cyprus issue’.

II. Enlargement, the Power of Attraction and the ‘Soft Security’ Instruments of the EU

As was stated earlier the ‘hard security’ instruments of the EU are still in developmental form³ – although it can clearly be seen that the EU has made substantial progress in developing a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) alongside the Common Foreign and Security

² This will not involve a comprehensive or systematic analysis of démarches, declarations and other instruments, but rather a focus on what the accession process (and tools and incentives related to that) has done to help the involved parties move towards a solution of the Cyprus issue.

³ See Allen and Smith, 2001: 97-115, for latest developments in EU foreign policy. See also Hill, 2001.

Policy (CFSP). Until the relationship between CFSP and ESDP is less ambiguous, however, NATO remains the best option insofar as security and military guarantees go in Europe (Hill 2001). The focus for the purpose of this paper is on ‘the soft security’ element of the EU, with specific emphasis on the power of attraction.

The Power of Attraction

The philosophical underpinning of the success of ‘the power of attraction’ (soft security) approach, whereby states are drawn in and socialized into a ‘civilizing constitution’ derives from two variants of liberalism; the most relevant of which in the post-Cold War era, is the ‘democratic peace’ variant.⁴ The democratic peace hypothesis at a basic level is based on the assumption that nations that are democratic do not want to fight each other. Thus by promoting the emergence of groupings of democratic states within an EU setting, this will create peace and a spillover effect to other non-member states.

The success of the democratic peace hypothesis relies of course on the assumption that democracy alone is enough to secure conflict prevention, and that inclusion and institutionalization can placate states that if excluded would be more militant. In other words, it relies on the assumption that the ‘collective responsibility’ within a regional grouping of democratic states makes conflict less likely. As Hill notes on this, “the instinct for a politics of inclusion over exclusion is generally correct”, but he also points out that “democracies are a necessary but not sufficient means of preventing conflict” (Hill 2001: 325).

The argument in this paper will suggest that ‘inclusion’ is indeed preferred to ‘exclusion’; one only has to look at the accession of Greece, Spain and Portugal in order to appreciate the role played by the EU system in the consolidation of democracy and stability in these countries. The EU clearly represents a ‘working peace system’ and “thus far in its history the EC/EU itself has proved remarkably free of conflict” (Hill, 2001:326). Moreover, in the case of Cyprus, the EU could provide the political and legal structures for which a bi-communal state could operate in a peaceful and equal way. Indeed, it has already demonstrated this in the case of Belgium – whereby a system of coordination and co-determination has led to equal representation of the various regions, and communities in the EU Councils. As Emerson and Tocci point out, “Belgium now gives equal rank to the central, regional and community tiers of government, and makes this consistent with the supremacy of EU law” (2002: 1-2).

⁴ The other is the moral-legal variant whereby “law and institutions help to bind states in an observance of common rules which increasingly mimic the principles of domestic (democratic) society” (Hill 2001: 324).

This paper of course will focus on the accession process and what it can do (and has done) to catalyse a solution to the Cyprus issue, rather than what the EU can offer if a solution to the Cyprus issue is found prior to membership on the basis of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation.⁵ Indeed, taking the argument of the ‘power of attraction’ to a more specific level, Munuera (1994) outlines several ways in which the appeal of membership (and inclusion) to the EU can prevent conflicts in Europe:

- First, “by imposing self-restraint on countries that want to show their good intentions and their readiness for membership”;
- Second, “by providing the EU with important external leverage over the behaviour of potential candidates” (Munuera 1994: 91).

The success of such a strategy he argues has been illustrated in various cases. In the case of Slovakia-Hungary whereby EC pressure played a key role in brokering the London Accord on Gabčíkovo and encouraging Bratislava to moderate its stance on its minorities. Additionally, such a strategy has been fruitful in the case of encouraging moderation in Tallinn’s treatment of ethnic Russian minorities through discreet diplomatic *démarches*.

Munuera acknowledges, however, that enlargement and the promise of accession is not enough as a lone strategy. Indeed given the variation in time frames for accession for candidate countries and the disillusion this may bring with it (e.g. Turkey) – it is noted that the carrot of accession should be combined with strategies and instruments that would work in the interim period. Indeed, he argues that if the time frame for membership is not in the near future, this may lead to frustration, and in this sense the EU should “find ways of providing countries earmarked for membership with gradual but effective integration” (Munuera 1994: 91-92). He argues moreover, that for the EU to have leverage, the candidate country must *perceive* that there are potential benefits to be gained by membership of the EU; membership must be a goal worth striving for despite any short-term adjustment and restructuring that may be painful. To ease the pain of any necessary transition and preserve the ‘power of attraction’ (and maintain leverage), the EU would have to provide some of the ‘substance’ of integration during any transitional

⁵ See Emerson and Tocci (2002a and 2002b) for comprehensive coverage of how the EU could accommodate a ‘common state’ of Cyprus – institutionally and legally.

period: financial assistance, customs union agreements, technical assistance, etc (Munuera 1994: 92).

Munuera also argues that ‘geographical clarity’ is needed if the ‘power of attraction’ is to be a successful strategy. He notes in particular that, “The European Union is likely to lose much of its influence...if some...countries feel that they are permanently excluded from the club, especially if they perceive this as an arbitrary decision...The European Union could even undermine regional stability if it was perceived to be drawing lines of division, or if some countries acted on the assumption that this was the case” (Munuera 1994: 92). Munuera concludes overall that, “the power of attraction of the European Union is and may remain an instrument for moderating behaviour, provided membership is forthcoming, perceived as worthwhile and clear as to its geographical coverage” (Munuera 1994: 92).

These arguments are important when considering the case of Turkey and Cyprus – what we must also factor in however in the case of Cyprus, is the entanglement of the resolution of the Cyprus issue with the enlargement of the EU to both Cyprus and Turkey. Of more salience for the analysis in this paper is the differentiation between the ‘power of attraction’ and the ‘political will’ of the main parties involved in the Cyprus issue. To maintain analytical clarity in this paper, we must distinguish between the two. In particular, we must acknowledge that the United Nations (UN)⁶ is the main organization trying to broker a ‘political’ solution on the island – and the EU is the organization hoping to catalyse the efforts of the UN through the accession process. The question then becomes, how far can the range of incentives offered by ‘power of attraction’ create the necessary ‘political will’ in the UN process amongst Turkish, Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot elites to work towards a solution of the Cyprus issue?

III. The Accession Process – The Effects on Turkey and the Cypriot Communities: The Reality

Context

When the European Commission delivered its favourable Opinion on the application of the government of Cyprus in 1993, it noted, “the adoption of the Community *acquis* would present no insurmountable problems, but that the division of Cyprus meant that the freedoms provided for under the EU Treaties could not be exercised fully throughout the island” (Andrews 1998: 17). Nevertheless, the Opinion also expressed the view that that the process of accession would

⁶ Other important actors include the US and the UK.

help to bring the communities in Cyprus closer together (Commission Opinion 1993). It was hoped that by sending out a positive signal to the people of Cyprus and attaching with it a time-frame for assessment, *this would act as a catalyst for finding a solution to the problem under UN direction and smoothing the road for accession by the whole of the island*. This was certainly what the Greek-Cypriots hoped for in the Opinion. However, the Turkish-Cypriots and Turkey reacted negatively, but it was hoped in time that they would participate and benefit from the process of accession.

Since the Opinion in 1993, the EU institutions have reiterated the view that the accession process could act as a catalyst for the solution of the Cyprus issue. At the Helsinki summit in December 1999, the EU confirmed Turkey's eligibility to join, in the hope that this would aid the drive to finding a solution to the Cyprus issue. Turkey had been waiting for confirmation of its eligibility since it first applied in 1963 – and had been denied such status in several Commission Opinions and Reports (1990, 1997) and European Council decisions (e.g. Luxemburg summit 1997); which had a detrimental effect on the Cyprus issue. The EU clearly hoped that by linking the Turkish accession process with progress on the resolution of the Cyprus issue, they could bring pressure to bear on Ankara, even though Turkey has been reluctant to acknowledge such an explicit link between its own accession and the resolution of the Cyprus issue (Ugur 2000: 237).

Since then, regular statements and declarations have reflected the EU's optimism in the accession process and the incentives that accompanies this as the 'best tool' for ensuring a peaceful coexistence of the two communities. The 'power of attraction' and with it the tool of conditionality (carrot and stick) has clearly been at the forefront of the EU 'strategy', and its belief that the accession process (for Cyprus and Turkey since 1999) will act as a 'catalyst' for the resolution of the Cyprus issue.

How successful has this 'strategy' been? Have the tools of accession and conditionality worked to persuade Turkey, the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots to move towards a resolution of the Cyprus issue through agreed UN resolutions? If not, what other methods and tools are available to the EU in order to achieve this outcome in the interim and long-term period?

IV. Evaluating the Strategy – The Perceptions of the Parties Involved

Accession and the Greek-Cypriot position

When the Government of Cyprus⁷ submitted its application to join the European Community on 4 July 1990, it was clearly felt the benefits of this decision would serve the interests of the entire people of Cyprus (Iacovou 1990). The motives for the Government of Cyprus were both of a political and economic nature – although the former objective was clearly primary. Politically, at the time of the application the Government of Cyprus believed that membership was a natural progression and that involving the EC in the Cyprus issue provided another avenue and another form of pressure in seeking a solution. It was believed that it would “create a more positive context” and that although it was not regarded as a sole vehicle for finding a solution it could, through supporting the UN initiatives, be a “major contributor by creating an incentive to both sides” (Interview: Greek-Cypriot diplomat, anonymous 1998). Economically, “Cyprus enjoyed one of the most advanced relationships between an associated country and the Community” (Gaudissart 1996: 20). Indeed one of the main motives for the application was, “The secure climate, together with the monetary stability that is expected as a result of the anticipated Economic and Monetary Union in Europe [that] created stable conditions for the long-term planning of production and investment” (Cyprus: The Way to Full Membership 1997: 10-11).

Indeed, it is the ‘security’ element that is significant in the Greek government’s strategy, and the hope that the EU will act as a catalyst to a solution for the Cyprus issue. It is hoped that the Europeanization of the Cyprus issue through accession:

- Will put pressure on non-interested and intransigent parties to find a solution to the Cyprus issue (e.g. Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots)
- Will involve another key global actor in the equation of resolving the Cyprus issue where the UN has thus far not been successful, despite many attempts in the past
- Will provide ‘security’ against any potential further armed intervention by Turkey – in particular when Cyprus becomes an EU member.

⁷ The internationally recognized Greek Cypriot government which controls southern Cyprus

Moreover, the Greek Cypriot strategy is clearly based on the ‘power of attraction’ – and the condition that Turkey will, eventually, want to comply with the EU in order to be rewarded for its behaviour. The incentive for Turkey is that it will be allowed to continue on its road to accession, with the economic and political support that this entails (through EU aid, funding etc). Additionally, Turkey may feel pressurized to be more compliant because if it does not, then it may well find that it will lose any bargaining power once Cyprus joins the EU.

Similarly, it is hoped that through accession, pressure can be brought on the main actors in the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)⁸ – the Turkish Cypriots who were there before 1974 (89, 000), the Turkish settlers that were brought in after 1974 (110,000), and the Turkish army (35,000).⁹ Indeed, the expectation is that the carrot of accession and in particular the economic and security benefits that this will bring with it for Turkish Cypriots will help to encourage a solution to the Cyprus issue. There is clear evidence that Turkish Cypriots have already realized the benefits of such incentives – with some 2000 Turkish Cypriots applying for Cypriot passports in order to be able to take advantage of future accession. The belief of the Government of Cyprus is that “if the prospect for a solution after accession is delayed, then thousands of Turkish Cypriots will vote with their feet” (Vassiliou 2001: 13).

It is clear that the Greek-Cypriot position has been the one with which EU decision-makers have sympathized. The Greek-Cypriot strategy of involving the EU reflects a historically established approach of the Greek side: internationalizing the Cyprus issue and involving sympathetic third parties in order to bring pressure to bear on the intransigent parties (Turkey, Turkish Cypriots). Such a policy was pursued in the 1950s when the Cypriot government sought to take the issue to the UN, and has been repeated in the 1990s, through seeking the involvement of the EU. This is not to say that the government of Cyprus has lost faith in a UN solution, but that the EU could act as an extra dimension in helping to resolve the Cyprus issue. More importantly, the EU has consistently reiterated its support for UN resolutions on Cyprus – resolutions that only recognize the government of Cyprus in the south as legitimate. In this sense, the EU has added credibility and legitimacy to the Greek Cypriot strategy and their desire to resolve the Cyprus issue through a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation solution.

With the Greek-Cypriots then, they did not need to be convinced that EU accession was beneficial, their strategy was clearly based on what the ‘power of attraction’ could do – in particular in giving the Greek Cypriots extra leverage to resolve the Cyprus issue. In this sense, if

⁸ Recognized only by Turkey in the international community.

⁹ EP Task Force Enlargement, 29 October 1998 – PE 167.238/ rev.3: 4

we try and evaluate this in terms of Munuera's conditions for the success of the 'power of attraction' – the EU affinity with the Greek-Cypriot cause and argument has meant that the EU has provided the government of Cyprus with a clear timetable for accession, provided the necessary incentives (economic, financial, security), and consistently confirmed Cyprus' European credentials and orientation. More importantly, the Greek-Cypriots *perceive* that the benefits of EU membership clearly add to the potential for the resolution of the Cyprus issue, as well as economic and security advantages of belonging to the European club. In terms of political will, the EU has not always had a great deal of leverage or scope for creating flexibility in the Greek-Cypriot negotiating position – in particular as a solution to the Cyprus issue was not a pre-condition for accession.¹⁰ However, the EU has more recently, in Cyprus' Accession Partnership, created extra conditionality for Cypriot accession in order to put greater pressure on the Greek Cypriots to work towards a solution. This is discussed below.

Accession and the Turkish Cypriot Position

Developments in EU–Cyprus relations in the 1990s have been viewed with extreme scepticism by the Turkish Cypriot leadership. From a Turkish Cypriot perspective the application of the government of Cyprus to join the EU was both illegitimate and illegal. Illegitimate because Turkish Cypriots were not involved in the application process, and illegal,¹¹ it is claimed, because of the 1959 Treaty of Guarantee, which stated that Cyprus could not become a member of an international organization of which only one of the motherland countries was a member (Greece). This, however, has been rejected by the EU, arguing that such a restriction does not apply to a *sui generis* organism such as the EU" (Bahcheli 2001: 10). Indeed, it is pointed out by the EU that Austria's 1955 State Treaty has a similar provision (preventing union with Germany), but this has not stopped Austria from joining the EU.

After Cyprus' inclusion as an enlargement candidate at the Corfu European Council (1994), and the subsequent decisions to begin negotiations with Cyprus were taken (1995, 1998) the Turkish-Cypriot position hardened. Rauf Denktaş, the leader of the self-declared TRNC, has cited the EU accession process as one of the major stumbling blocks to progression. From the

¹⁰ This was the perception of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots, at least.

¹¹ The Turkish government commissioned a legal 'opinion' on this issue that was drawn up by a London QC, Maurice Mendelson, and circulated at the UN in October 2001. Prof. James Crawford of Cambridge University, Professor Gerhard Hafner of Vienna University and Prof. Alain Pellet of Paris-X University, however, have categorically rejected Turkey's contention that Cyprus' accession to the EU would be illegal in a unanimous further legal opinion. This opinion was published on 8 January 2002 and forwarded to the UN by the government of Cyprus (Cyprus News Jan 2002: 2)

outset, he has attached extra conditions to the potential success of the UN in brokering a solution to the Cyprus issue. These pre-conditions include:

- The recognition of the illegal TRNC as a separate and independent state
- A confederal solution to the Cyprus issue
- The halting of the accession process until a political solution was found and the Turkish Cypriots could contribute to their future

The position taken by Denktash was in contravention to the established UN agreed basis for a solution; namely that of a federal, bi-zonal, bi-communal framework. Denktash effectively rejected any invitation to attend direct intercommunal talks until after these conditions had been met, following unsuccessful attempts at negotiation in Troutbeck and Glion (1997), and the beginning of accession negotiations between the EU and Cyprus in 1998. Denktash also refused an invitation by the Greek Cypriot leader, Glafcos Clerides, to join the Cypriot negotiating team in March 1998, arguing that this would only be possible if a solution was first found and the illegal TRNC was recognized as an equal negotiating state. The Greek Cypriot position remained unchanged, and rejected any such preconditions.

The Turkish Cypriot leadership maintained and hardened its position between 1998 and 2001 e.g. Refusing to attend the sixth round of talks scheduled in 2001, imposing restriction on the movement of UN forces, etc (Tocci 2001: 5). This was an indication that the ‘carrots’ being offered by the EU in the form of mainly economic but also political/security incentives were clearly not enough to persuade the Turkish Cypriot leadership to change its ‘intransigent’ position on seeking a settlement in Cyprus. The reasons for this of course were various. A pertinent reason, however, was that of ‘perception’: the perception of what was being offered by the EU to the Turkish Cypriots; and the subsequent perception of the Turkish Cypriots relating to their future ‘security’ in Cyprus under the EU umbrella (Bahcheli 2001: 208-212).

Bahcheli has noted that the “EU has sought to overcome Turkish Cypriot resistance by emphasizing the considerable economic benefits that membership would bring to the island’s poorer Turkish Community” (2001: 204). Segments of the Turkish Cypriot population clearly recognize the economic benefits of a united Cyprus in the EU¹² – Turkish-Cypriot and Turkish

¹² According to the post-accession financial aid for new EU members in 2004-2006 (published by the Commission, 30 January 2002) the total amounts foreseen in commitments to the north of Cyprus are €39million in 2004, €67 million in 2005 and €100 million in 2006 (Cyprus News, January 2002: 2).

businessmen and politicians, in a rare step, have recently chastised Denktash for his rigidity (Economist 2001, 16). In addition, to this the Turkish Cypriot public have also illustrated their frustration from many years of economic isolation through mass demonstrations in northern Nicosia in July 2000 and a public sector workers strike in December 2000 (Tocci 2001: 10). Having said this, however, “Even if a majority of Turkish Cypriots want a deal – which may be the case – their leaders (and more importantly, leaders in Turkey itself) are unprepared to accept one on the terms being offered...” (Barkey and Gordon 2002: 5).

This point needs explaining further. Economic incentives, for the Turkish Cypriot leadership at least, are not a primary incentive – and certainly not an incentive that will change the minds of the Turkish Cypriot leadership given that they have endured economic hardship over the last thirty-five years. In this sense, even though there is a promise of greater riches for the Turkish Cypriots in the EU, the Turkish Cypriot leadership is willing to endure economic subsidization by Turkey, and at worst, full integration into the Turkish economy in order to gain political independence. As Bahcheli has noted “...Turkish Cypriots prefer to have their own state in order to secure their future, even as they realise that lack of recognition and isolation has impeded economic development” (Bahcheli 2001: 211).

As well as economic incentives, the EU has “pointed out several opportunities available to national minorities to protect their interests within the EU”, given Turkish Cypriot fears over Greek Cypriot domination (Bahcheli 2001: 204). For the Turkish Cypriots, however, their ‘historical experience’ is very difficult to overcome – Cyprus after 1974 suited the security needs of the Turkish Cypriots. This is “because they have been able to exercise self-government in their own state, and to enjoy the security provided by Turkey’s substantial military presence in the TRNC” (Bahcheli 2001: 209). The EU has to work within the parameters of ‘historical distrust’ and also the perception of the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey that the EU and Brussels is heavily biased towards the Greek Cypriot position.

The main security concern for the Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus stems from their belief that as a minority they would be extremely vulnerable in a re-united Cyprus. This belief manifests itself in various forms. First, as mentioned above, through the historical experience of the Turkish Cypriots. Second, through the belief that if a reunited Cyprus entered the EU without Turkey being a member, then this would effectively negate the power of Turkey *vis-à-vis* intervention and protection of the Turkish Cypriots on the island. Turkish Cypriots do not accept EU assurances that Turkey’s role as guarantor power of the island would not be affected by EU membership. Neither do they accept that the EU will provide them with framework to protect

their rights as a minority in Cyprus. Indeed, the tendency of the EU to avoid involvement in intra-state conflicts (e.g. Basque conflict), and references by the Turkish Cypriot leadership to the mistreatment of the Turks of Western Thrace as a minority in the EU creates the perception of a security threat rather than guarantee (Tocci 2001: 10-11). Third, there is also a fear in the north that the fundamental EU principle of the freedom of movement and the application of the EU's *acquis* will mean that many Greek-Cypriots will infiltrate and swamp the north. Additionally there is a fear that properties belonging to the poorer Turkish Cypriot population will be bought up by the relatively richer Greek-Cypriots,¹³ and as a result of both these trends many Turkish Cypriots would emigrate to other EU countries in search of better economic conditions.

It seems then that for the Turkish Cypriots their 'security fears' far outweigh any potential economic benefits and incentives offered by the EU. Where then does this leave us with the power of attraction argument? The EU has clearly offered the Turkish Cypriots financial/economic incentives for the short, medium and long term. Indeed, many Turkish Cypriot citizens have recognized the benefits of joining the EU economically – with offers of 'special financial' packages if a solution is found previous to accession and an agreed allocation of €206 million of financial aid for the post-accession reconstruction of northern Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot leadership however, has been less convinced by economic incentives alone.

Additionally, the Turkish Cypriot leadership has been offered a place alongside the Cypriot delegation to negotiate the accession process, and they also have a clear timetable for accession on the condition that a solution to the Cyprus issue is found before the end of accession negotiations. The terms of this offer, however, has been criticized. Indeed, it has been argued that by "extending the invitation through the recognised RoC [Republic of Cyprus] and only mentioning Turkish Cypriot participation without veto rights as members of the Greek Cypriot negotiating team, the initiative merely served to alienate TRNC officials and enhance the status of the recognised RoC" (Tocci 2001: 16). Perhaps here then the EU can do more in the way of 'political' or 'representational incentive'. Tocci has argued that, "If instead Turkish Cypriot officials were invited directly as Turkish representatives of the future 'common state' of Cyprus, Turkish Cypriot reactions may well be different" (2001: 16). Additionally, others have argued that invitations to participate should be "issued directly by the EU (rather than the Republic of

¹³ Greek Cypriot per capita income (\$13,000) is estimated to be about three times that of a Turkish Cypriot (\$4,158). Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report, Cyprus, 3rd Quarter, 1998, 7, 29.

Cyprus Government) for Turkish representatives to take part on an equal footing in accession talks; the island's team to be called simply 'Cyprus'" (Ludford 2002: 1).

The most important stumbling block has been the issue of 'security'. However, one does have to question the fears surrounding the future security of the Turkish Cypriots. Particularly important in this is the false propaganda diffused by the Turkish Cypriot leadership on the question of the future 'security' of Turkish Cypriots in the EU. As one senior Commission official pointed out, "In terms of security the EU does not regard it as an EU issue...and will not interfere with any security or constitutional arrangements agreed as part of a solution through the intercommunal talks" (Interview, Senior Commission official anonymous 2002). In this sense then the argument and fears about the future security of Turkish Cypriots can clearly be resolved prior to EU accession - and the EU will offer the same security offered to all member states.

More specifically, in terms of the 'security fears' mentioned above, they are a matter for the two leaders of the communities in the intercommunal talks. In this context, the main fears of the Turkish Cypriots can be addressed before EU membership – in particular with regard to derogations on movement (which can be incorporated into the EU framework), and the protection of Turkish Cypriots through the maintenance of a Turkish military presence after a solution has been negotiated. With regard to the former, this has already been discussed and, with regard to the latter, this has already been agreed in principle by both sides.

This is not to say that the EU cannot do more to convince Turkish Cypriots that they will be secure in a 'common', federal state of Cyprus in the EU. Indeed the EU could offer itself, and be recognized as a guarantor of a political settlement in Cyprus, and they could also offer some guarantee as to the incorporation of Turkey into any future security arrangements. Additionally, there could be a more explicit discussion and formalization of discussions on derogations from the *acquis communautaire*, in particular on freedom of movement and property rights – the main concerns of the Turkish Cypriots (Ludford 2002).

Accession and Turkey

The EU relationship with Turkey has been vague and ambiguous since the signing of the Ankara Association agreement in 1963, and as noted by Gomez and Peterson "relations between the two sides have swung, pendulum-like, between periods of intense discord and amity" (2000: 14). It can clearly be illustrated that the EU, in its relations with Turkey historically, and in relation to the 'power of attraction' argument, has failed to fulfil adequately the three conditions outlined by

Munuera¹⁴ in order to ensure ‘good behaviour’ and in particular, to maintain leverage with regard to the resolution of the Cyprus issue.

Although Turkey has aspired to become a member of the EC/EU for many years, Turkish applications to join the European club were consistently rejected by the EP, the Commission and the Member States because Turkey did not meet the conditions set by the Copenhagen criteria. Historically, this has sent out negative signals to Turkey about its European orientation, but more fundamentally it has had a detrimental effect in terms of changing Turkish minds on moving towards a Cyprus settlement.¹⁵ However, more recently, relations between the EU and Ankara have improved and there is no doubt that the EU’s decision to accord Turkey candidate status at the 1999 Helsinki European Council summit was a major reason for the improvement. Indeed, according to Gordon, it “was a historic turning point that will have long-term benefits for the entire eastern Mediterranean region” (Gordon 2000).

The EU clearly recognizes that in order to achieve a settlement in Cyprus, incentives have to be offered to Turkey if the ‘power of attraction’ is to change minds in Ankara. Many in the EU, US and elsewhere see Ankara as a fundamental supporter of the illegal TRNC, and the policies of its leader, Rauf Denktash. Indeed, many view Ankara as key protagonists in the formulation of Turkish Cypriot positions and policies on the Cyprus issue. For the EU then encouraging Ankara to change its mind and adopt a more compromising stance on Cyprus would help to create a more accommodating climate in which to resolve the Cyprus issue. The hope is that the benefits of accession to the EU for Turkey, which has been a long-standing ambition, will far outweigh the importance of its occupation of Cyprus for mainly strategic reasons. As is pointed out by Bahcheli “western officials believe that – since EU membership is so highly prized by Turkish leaders – Ankara would agree to a negotiated Cyprus settlement along federal lines if it were given a clear timetable for accession” (2001: 218). Indeed the Turkish Ambassador to the EU in December 1999 suggested that “all the problems with Greece, the Cypriot question...could be resolved rapidly...and easily if the EU agreed...to admit Turkey in to the European family” (Akyal 1999).

Perhaps the most important reason why the EU believes Turkey will want to work towards a Cyprus settlement is because the day of accession for Cyprus looms ever closer for the Republic of Cyprus. The government of Cyprus has already closed twenty-nine of the required thirty-one

¹⁴ See Gomez and Peterson 2000: 16-18 for an analysis of EU-Turkey relations.

¹⁵ We do, however, have to be cautious in asserting this argument, as Turkish minds have clearly still not changed on Cyprus – despite more positive developments in EU-Turkey relations. This suggests that Turkey has no intention of changing its long-term position and expansionist policy on Cyprus, which is that of division and partition.

chapters¹⁶ and it is estimated that it should accede to the Community by 2004. The ramifications of a divided Cyprus joining the EU are potentially disastrous for Turkey and its interest *vis-à-vis* the European Union. First, what is effectively an intercommunal or Greco-Turkish dispute would become a EU-Turkey dispute – presenting grave political, security and military implications in the context of the development of an ESDP. Second, if Cyprus accedes as a divided island, this would effectively, alongside Greece, give the Greeks greater scope to block Turkish accession to the EU without a resolution of the Cyprus issue (Tocci 2001: 4; Bahcheli 2001: 215-6). It is hoped that because such high costs are attached to intransigence *vis-à-vis* movement towards the resolution of the Cyprus issue – Turkey will become more pro-active in the search for a solution.¹⁷ Added to this are the positives for Turkey of a unified island joining the EU. As Barkey and Gordon have noted “the inclusion of Turkish Cypriots in the EU would have the added benefits of making Turkish and official EU language, and perhaps help to lower the psychological barrier to Turkey’s eventual accession” (2001: 7).

The EU’s developing relationship with Turkey is based on clear conditions¹⁸ – and appetizing financial ‘carrots’ and incentives – the ultimate prize being that of membership to the EU. One of those conditions is “to strongly support the UN Secretary General’s efforts to bring a successful conclusion to the process of finding a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem” – a condition explicitly expressed in the Commission’s Accession Partnership document formulated in November 2000.¹⁹ Clearly, Turkey has not fulfilled this condition thus far. However, this alongside the fact that the conditionality of solution before accession for the Republic of Cyprus does not exist means that Cyprus could enter the EU divided – with grave consequences for Turkey’s European aspirations as noted above.

Turkey’s relationship with the EU since Helsinki has been of a more positive nature. The EU has been keen to ensure progress with Turkey’s pre-accession preparations through the development of a clear strategy for Turkey – consolidated at the Nice European Council (2000) and culminating in Turkey’s Accession Partnership in March 2001. Turkey has received an

¹⁶ See http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/negotiations/pdf/stateofplay_jan2002.pdf for latest on enlargement negotiations

¹⁷ This however, does not look very likely given the most recent political turmoil in Turkey (July 2002) and the resignation of Ismail Cem, as Turkish Foreign Minister. His replacement, Gurel, is seen as more hardline in his position on Turkey’s EU orientation and on Cyprus and he has already firmly stated that there would be no major changes to the Turkish position on Cyprus. As Cypriot Foreign Minister, Yiannakis Cassoulides commented “Developments in Turkey do not make us more optimistic” (Hadjipapas 2002: 36).

¹⁸ As well as other important conditions for future membership e.g. human rights, political and economic reform, addressing differences with Greece etc

abundance of funding from the EU²⁰ – and been promised extra money on the condition that it proceeds with the difficult economic reforms required to comply with EU criteria for membership (Interview, Senior Commission Official, anonymous 2002).

The effect so far, however, has been negative in terms of Turkish movement on the Cyprus issue. Turkey has supported the Turkish Cypriot line on Cyprus, and more importantly Turkey has taken concrete steps to integrate the TRNC with Turkey both economically and politically. In 1997 there was a TRNC-Turkey Joint Declaration. Both parties agreed to establish an Association Council between Turkey and the TRNC, with the aim of drawing up measures relating to economic and fiscal integration of the two countries, as well as partial integration in foreign policy, defence and security (Joint Declaration 1997). On the basis of the 1997 joint declaration, there was agreement in 1998 to move towards a Turkey-TRNC ‘joint economic zone’ – thus formalizing the virtual *de facto* position (Nugent 2000: 143). Since then annexation threats have been consistently made by the Turkish Cypriot leadership and importantly by Turkish elites. In November 2001 the Turkish Prime Minister, Bulent Ecevit, threatened that, “Taking southern Cyprus in to the European Union means handing over to the south the TRNC... In that case, a decision for annexation with the TRNC may be taken” (cited by Boulton: 2001). Ismail Cem, the Turkish foreign minister, also warned that Turkey might soon be forced to take a ‘definitive decision’ on Cyprus with a ‘heavy cost’ (Ibid).

The ‘power of attraction’ and the EU conditions and incentives that accompany this have not worked to persuade Turkish elites to take a more conciliatory stance on Cyprus. The reasons for this are varied – but one major reason is the perception of Turkish elites with regard to EU promises and conditions – and in particular with regard to the EU’s credibility. We can again refer to the principles identified by Munuera for the ‘power of attraction’ to be viable and credible, in order to gain some understanding as to why this is the case. Turkey, historically, was not given any incentive to cooperate or conciliate on Cyprus (or even membership). It was given no time-frame for accession to the EU, its applications were rejected on often ambiguous as well as genuine grounds, and funding and financial incentives were blocked or withheld – the result of Greece’s membership of the EU and the EP’s stern stance on Turkey’s record on Cyprus, human rights, etc.

¹⁹ For full details of the Accession Partnership document, see <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/turkey/docs.htm>

²⁰ See <http://www.deltur.cec.eu.int/english/e-mali-overview.html> for details of planned and implemented financial assistance to Turkey.

However, this does not explain why Turkey still has not changed its mind on Cyprus given the decision taken at Helsinki, and the subsequent positive developments and incentives offered to Turkey. The question is: can the EU do more in the short and medium term to encourage Turkey to move towards a more conciliatory stance based on its strategy of conditionality, carrots and sticks? More saliently, can the EU actually do any more than it is currently doing to create the political will necessary to move towards a solution of the Cyprus issue?

The EU has still not been forthcoming with a clearer timetable for Turkish accession – and given the volatile nature of Turkey's internal reforms, it would be very difficult and unrealistic for the EU to set a precise time and date for accession. In terms of financial incentives, the EU has clearly provided the funding for Turkey to pursue painful structural change in the medium and long term – albeit based on clear conditionality for internal reform and management of the Turkish economy. However, the EU could do more financially to help Turkey in the short term – as the Turks have clearly been unhappy about the levels of funding that they have received from the EU in order to fulfil the economic criteria for accession and membership. Additionally, the EU could further integrate and include Turkey into EU structures and policies, in the short and medium term. This has been achieved to some extent with ESDP (details of which will be discussed below) – but could also include encouragement for Turkey to adopt the Euro prior to membership (Tocci 2001: 18).

IV. Power of Attraction – an Evaluation: Signs of Hope – Changing Minds?

Events in 2001 and 2002: Movement in the Turkish, Turkish Cypriot positions?

The 'power of attraction', as suggested by the analysis above, does not seem to have been very effective in changing minds towards a more conciliatory stance towards a solution of the Cyprus issue. However, there were more positive movements towards the end of 2001 and in 2002, which have led to the creation of a more progressive climate for a solution. The first important development was the agreement to resume the intercommunal talks between the leaders of the two communities in December 2001. The talks represented the first direct meeting between President Glafcos Clerides, and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash since August 1997 in Glion, Switzerland. Since December 2001 the talks have continued apace. Having re-opened on 16 January, the two leaders had completed forty four separate sessions by 2 July, all held face-to-face within the UN buffer zone under the presence of the UN Secretary General's Special Adviser on Cyprus, Alvaro de Soto.

The crucial question for the argument in this paper is: have the accession process and the power of attraction been the reason for this change of mood on the part of the Turkish Cypriot (and Turkish) leadership? There is a general consensus that the decision taken at the Helsinki European Council in 1999 was a trigger to the developments in EU-Turkey relations and subsequently the resumption of intercommunal talks between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in December 2001.²¹ The Accession Partnerships, signed by both Cyprus and Turkey since 1999, have included clear conditions under the political criteria (short-term priorities) to work towards a solution of the Cyprus issue. For Cyprus there was a condition to maximize its efforts for a solution to the Cyprus issue, and for Turkey to do everything in its power to encourage the movement towards a solution of the Cyprus issue.

According to one senior Commission official, these movements were directly attributable to the “prospect of accession for Cyprus” and were “delivered by the EU accession timetable”. (Interview, anonymous 2002). Moreover, it was suggested that since Romano Prodi’s visit to Cyprus on October 2001, confirming the inevitability of the accession of Cyprus to the EU, both Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leadership have taken the implication of this occurring without a solution to the Cyprus issue more seriously. More specifically, the pressure of the potential accession for Cyprus without a solution in 2004, and the implication this might have for future EU-Turkey relations and the north of Cyprus, forced the hand of Rauf Denktash to return to the negotiating table – and agree to a target date of June 2002 for a solution.²² This date, of course, reflected a tactical consideration on the part of the Turkish Cypriot leadership – based on the conditionality of the timetable for accession and the flexibility for renegotiation of the terms of accession to incorporate Turkish Cypriot interests. If a solution is not agreed before this date, then it is very difficult to renegotiate anything of substance – only the technical aspects of the terms of accession (Interview, Hoffmeister 2002).

Given the slow progress in the talks thus far, many have questioned the motives behind the Turkish Cypriot and Turkish (elites in Ankara) move to agree to resume talks. Indeed, it has been suggested on the one hand that this was a delaying tactic by the Turkish Cypriot leadership and “that the return to negotiations over the Cyprus issue was a tactical manoeuvre on the part of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots intended to derail Greek Cypriot EU accession by exposing

²¹ This is not to argue that other external factors have not been important (see below), but that the decision taken at Helsinki was an equally, if not more important contributory factor in creating a more positive climate for negotiation and reconciliation.

²² Alvaro de Soto has said that the June 2002 target date for the conclusion of the intercommunal talks envisaged by the UN Security Council was a “desirable goal” accepted by both leaders, but not a deadline (Cyprus News March 2002)

Greek Cypriot intransigence” (Friederich 2002: 1). On the other hand, the fact that the Turkish Cypriot side is discussing the ‘key’ principles required for a solution, does suggest a more genuine and sincere motive for progress (although question marks still hang over what this means in substance). It also seems that the climate created by the accession process has also seen even greater flexibility on the Greek-Cypriot side – in particular with regard to the question of security – a key concern for the Turkish Cypriots (Interview, Hoffmeister 2002).

The looming accession date for Cyprus then has had a catalysing effect in the sense that the re-launch of direct intercommunal talks would have probably not happened without it. Although progress in the intercommunal talks has been slow with regard to real substance, EU conditionality, once again, will allow extra pressure to be put on the Greek Cypriot side and in particular on the Turkish Cypriot side for a solution before accession. More specifically, the EU position on Cyprus at the Helsinki European Council in 1999, allowed greater scope for pressure to be placed on the Greek-Cypriots if progress was not made on a solution. The Greek Cypriot government, as noted above, is clearly willing to make concessions – but the main difficulty for the Greek Cypriot leadership would be carrying the electorate, who still adhere to hard-line positions (Friederich 2002). The EU’s position was more cautious than in the past at Helsinki – it was still acknowledged that a solution was not a pre-condition of Cypriot entry – but stated that the final decision on membership would be taken considering “all relevant factors”. As is noted by Tocci this would imply that the “Greek Cypriots must have demonstrated that they have done everything in their power to bring about a settlement” with the consequence that if this was not the case “the Union would be able to put the necessary pressure on the Greek Cypriot leadership if its position appeared uncompromising” (Tocci 2001b). In terms of the Turkish Cypriot leadership and Turkey, the re-launch of the intercommunal talks, and the target date of 2002, will allow an intensification of pressure from the international community to change the minds of Turkish and Turkish Cypriot elites.

There is evidence to suggest that the Turkish accession process, in particular since 1999 and the decision taken at Helsinki, has served as a trigger for creating a more progressive attitude amongst Turkish elites – in order to improve its relations with the EU. Turkey has been moved to a more accommodating stance on various issues with regard to Greek-Turkish relations²³ and its incorporation into the ESDP – creating a more positive climate for negotiation between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders over Cyprus (this has been mutually reinforcing – the resumption of the Cyprus talks has led to a more positive climate for resolving Greek-Turkish

²³ See also *The Economist*, 14 April 2002: 44 on the renewed cooperation between Greece and Turkey.

disputes). More specifically, accommodation of Turkey into the ESDP structures, through an agreement reached between Turkey, Britain and the US²⁴ has helped to allay Turkish Cypriot security fears and improve Turkey-EU relations.

Additionally the foreign ministers of Greece and Turkey met in February 2002 to open talks to end their differences on important issues. Talks have been opened on the thorny issue of the oil-rich seabed of the Aegean, as well as issues concerning territorial waters and control of airspace, which has brought the two countries to the brink of war on several occasions.²⁵ The driving force behind this was no doubt the decision taken at the Helsinki European Council²⁶ and the positive climate created subsequently. As one Greek official noted “Now that we have set up a climate of greater trust and the Cypriot talks are under way, we feel that the time is ripe to try and resolve some of the bigger, thornier issues” (cited by Smith 2002).

The prospect of accession then has clearly provided a greater incentive for Turkey to undertake a more positive stance on key issues of contention – which it otherwise might not have taken.

V. Conclusions

The focus of this paper was on evaluating the ‘power of attraction’ for resolving the Cyprus issue – can the EU accession process (soft security and tools available within this) act as a catalyst for the resolution of the Cyprus issue?

The preceding analysis has illustrated that this has been quite complex in the case of Cyprus. Movement towards a solution has not just depended on what the EU has offered the two communities on the island in the form of incentives and conditions – but also Turkey – seen as a key actor and supporter of the illegal TRNC. In this sense then, Turkey’s path to accession – and the incentives offered by the EU to encourage Turkish elites to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria –

²⁴ Turkey had previously threatened to veto assured access to NATO’s planning capabilities, which would of hindered the EU’s plans to operationalize the planned Rapid Reaction Force of some 60,000 troops. Greece had also previously implied that it would veto an accord on the ESDP if Cyprus and the Aegean were excluded from the proposed army’s purview.

²⁵ See McDonald (2000) for more detail on these disputes.

²⁶ There were also other important contributory factors previous to Helsinki. After severe earthquakes in Turkey in August 1999 and earthquakes in Greece in September 1999, to which both countries reciprocally sent aid and help, there was a change in attitude and relations between the two countries. This engendered a new climate in which relations between the two countries could be improved, and culminated in Greece fundamentally changing its position in the EU on Turkey through dropping its veto on Turkey becoming a Member of the EU (at the Helsinki European Summit in December 1999). This, of course, was on the pre-condition that Turkey reciprocated this goodwill with a commitment to settle its differences with Greece. The implications of this action for a settlement to the Cyprus issue remain ambiguous, however.

was inexorably linked to movement on the Cyprus issue and encouraging a more compromising stance on Cyprus.

What this paper has shown is that the EU in the past did not fulfil the conditions outlined by Munuera for the success of the power of attraction as a tool for resolving conflict – in particular with reference to Turkey. This resulted in a hardening of positions of the Turkish Cypriot and Turkish elites. The EU and Greek-Cypriot perception was that the accession process could act as a catalyst for a solution to the Cyprus issue – but it seemed to have the opposite effect. The EU strategy and perception did not reflect the Turkish Cypriot or Turkish perception, and in this sense the EU could not gain or maintain any leverage on the Cyprus issue. Neither Turkey nor the Turkish Cypriot leadership *perceived* that the incentives offered by the EU outweighed their historical interest and policy on Cyprus – or that the conditions upon which these were offered were entirely justified. Turkish Cypriot and Turkish elite perception of EU actions and policy did not meet their interests (or fears) – or address their key concerns.

The process of accession and the EU's strategy of conditionality and incentives have not worked to 'catalyse' a settlement to the Cyprus issue – *but it has not catalysed catastrophe either*, as suggested by more pessimistic analyses (Olgun 2002). The EU has, however, worked consistently to persuade the Greek-Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots and Turkey to move towards a more conciliatory stance on the basis of extra conditionality, medium-term incentives and further participation and integration into the EU's decision-making structures. More importantly, since the Helsinki European Council in 1999, the 'power of attraction' and the timing of the accession process for Cyprus has worked to create a more positive climate for the negotiation of a solution to the Cyprus issue. In this sense, it could be argued that the 'power of attraction' is beginning to 'change minds' on Cyprus.

This does not imply, however, that the EU cannot do more to encourage the Greek-Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey to compromise on Cyprus. The EU can certainly 'oil the wheels' of compromise further, and take a more pro-active line in persuading the Greek Cypriots to move to an even more flexible position in the intercommunal talks through extra conditionality; in addressing further the security fears and concerns of the Turkish Cypriots by offering itself as a guarantor to any agreed settlement, and by drawing Turkey further into the EU structures and offering greater assistance for the painful structural reconstruction it is undergoing in the short term.

At present the positive relations between Greece and Turkey and the fact that the leaders of the two communities are talking once again is progress in itself – even though there has been a

lack of substantial progress made in the latter. The power of attraction and the incentives offered by the EU has played a substantial part in helping to create that progressive climate – and can clearly do more to support the peace process. The question that now remains is that of the ‘political will’ of the parties involved – in particular in relation to the Turkish Cypriot and Turkish positions. Unfortunately the situation in Cyprus is complex and the EU is only one of many actors involved in ‘catalysing’ a solution to the Cyprus issue through the ‘power of attraction’. However, if the EU, alongside other important international actors such as the UN the US and the UK, can persuade the Greek and Turkish Cypriots to negotiate a settlement prior to Cyprus’ accession – the EU can certainly provide the necessary framework, guarantees and legal and institutional structures to accommodate a ‘common’, federal state of Cyprus and the interests of the two communities on an equal basis. A solution to the long-standing Cyprus issue would certainly be a very welcome by-product of the EU’s enlargement process – and the power of attraction and accession.

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